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# The Nice Children

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## THE NICE CHILDREN

Our parents whispered (and so it was not  
One of the things we ever forgot)  
That Blaine had been born in a toilet bowl,  
His dumb fat ma misreading the signals.  
We nice children repeated it  
To his face, and he never denied  
It unless a beatific smile is denial.  
And anyway his knowledge of our knowledge  
Only confirmed him in his choice of a role  
As selfless scientist doing research on  
Every little anatomy, feminine or virile.

We nicer children found him interesting as hell,  
And then, like all hells, not quite bearable.  
“There’s Blaine,” we’d cry, “let’s hide from him.”  
And hide we would, watching through  
Leaves as his smile went dim,  
But never quite disappearing even when  
He and his dumb fat ma moved away.

Now when I sometimes run  
Into one of the nice children again  
In airports or parking lots we grin  
Hard and ask each other whatever happened to wild Diane  
Or Bob the thief or good old Rose—  
But we never ask about good old Blaine.  
We’re still hiding, but what we hide from, of course,  
Is that guiltless, confident smile  
That plays its flat, unbuttoning light  
Over the hiding place  
Of nice money, nice booze,  
Nice adultery, nice divorce.